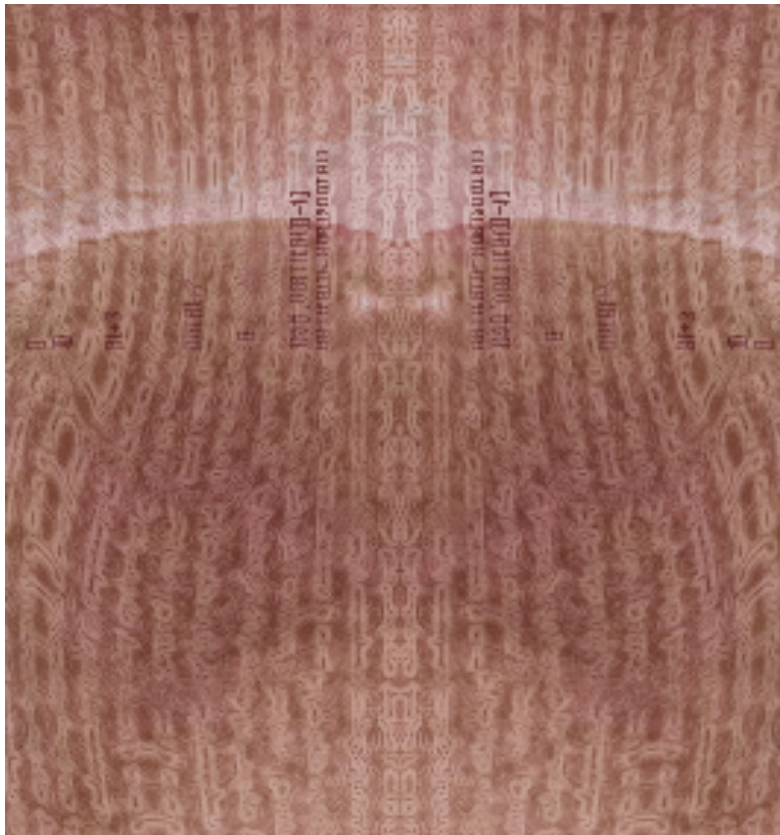


2002 Tobey Crockett Email Interview of Joseph Nechvatal on his Art Music



Joseph Nechvatal, *licker OtO, even* (2002) maquette

*Tobey Crockett: I was remembering that you used to play two different tapes simultaneously, making sound collages of various types. Do you still do that?*

Joseph Nechvatal: Oh yes, but tape is out now and digital is in.

*Tobey Crockett: What was your aim in mixing sounds like that and how did you structure those experiments?*

Joseph Nechvatal: I guess that the basic premise behind my sound art is an exploration of the introspective world of the imagination under the influence of our speedy electronic-computerized environment. I know that is rather broad, but it is my motivation. I figure that since it is difficult making any simple sense of today's swirling phantasmagorical media society, the general proposition behind my sound art may best be to create a paradoxical and conflictual summation of this sense of uncertainty by expressing overtly our overall feeling of ripe delirium through simultaneity. Through simultaneity and noise I try to increase the complexity of sound to the point of near hysteria.

*Tobey Crockett: Did mixing music like that have an effect and/or grow out of the way you mix images in your visual work?*

Joseph Nechvatal: Yes. In my case the visual art came first. When I started DJing - some at the lower east side club 8BC and at my after-hours Speed Club at ABC No Rio in the mid-1980s - I already was deeply committed to a level of complexity where one was able to perceive the material either abstractly or representationally (or both if you were as deeply into the work as I was). I determined to problematize both minimalism and pop aesthetic with a phantasmagoric and decadent methodology.

I began mixing with the presumption that an information bomb had exploded, showering us with bits of sound-information bytes, thus drastically changing the way in which we perceived and act and dream.

*Tobey Crockett: Do you listen to electronica re-mix music now, or have any thoughts on the DJ, mixing phenomena?*

Joseph Nechvatal: I simply love much of it! Electronic-based sound, by virtue of its distinctive electron constitution and hence networked fluidity, floats in an extensive stratosphere of virtuality. The particular constitution of electronic-based sound is best understood as an osmotic membrane. A sound blotter of instantaneous ubiquity and proliferation. This use of electronica results in the atomization and disintegration of what once was considered normality into an enhanced immateriality. This delirious disintegration and merging yields up to the ear's scrutiny a ghostly audio panorama based on circulation. Electronic-based sound reflects (and works with) de-centered prior cultural pop power. The world of sound now, when viewed as shaped by de-centered electronic overload, can be understood as only a flustered code of digital signifiers: a confused collective representation which bewilderingly continues to mutate its own reproduction.